

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A navigation and promotion distribution system, comprising:
  - a navigation module receptive of information relating to a current location of a user, a target destination, and location-dependent navigational information, wherein said navigation module is adapted to generate a navigational instruction based on the navigational information, the current location, and the target destination;
  - a promotion module receptive of information relating promotional offers, and the target destination, wherein said promotion module is adapted to select a promotional offer based on an inference of user interest, wherein the inference of user interest is based on the target destination; and
  - an output adapted to communicate the navigational instruction and the selected promotional offer to the user.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to a current time, and the inference of user interest is based on the current time.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to traffic characteristics in a region relating to at least one of the current location and the target destination, and the inference of user interest is based on the traffic characteristics.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to weather characteristics in a region relating to at least one of the current location and the target destination, and the inference of user interest is based on the weather characteristics.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to the current location, and the inference of user interest is based on the current location.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to at least one available route between a current location and a target destination, and the inference of user interest is based on the available route.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to an estimated time until arrival at the target destination, and the inference of user interest is based on the estimated time until arrival at the target destination.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein said promotion module is receptive of information relating to a time since a last stop, and the inference of user interest is based on the time since the last stop.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the promotion system is receptive of information relating to user personal information and user preferences, and said promotional system is adapted to determine user needs based on the user personal information and the user preferences, and to infer user interest based on the user needs.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the user personal information and user preferences are at least partially based on at least one of a user driving history and a user consumption history.

11. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

- a speech recognizer adapted to recognize a user speech input, thereby extracting at least one of the target destination and user needs;
- a dialogue manager adapted to formulate prompts designed to extract information relating to user needs; and
- a speech generator receptive of the generated navigational instructions, selected promotional offers, and formulated prompts, and adapted to generate speech useful for communicating the generated navigational instructions, selected promotional offers, and formulated prompts to the user.

12. A method of distributing a promotional offer, comprising:  
receiving information relating to a target destination of the user;  
receiving information relating to promotional offers;  
making an inference of user interest based on the target destination;  
selecting a promotional offer based on the inference of user interest; and  
communicating the selected promotional offer to the user.

13. The method of claim 12, comprising:  
receiving information relating to a current location of the user;  
receiving information relating to location-dependent navigational options;  
generating a navigational instruction based on the navigational options, the current location, and the target destination; and  
communicating the generated navigational instruction to the user.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving information relating to a current time, wherein said making an inference of user interest is further based on the current time.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving information relating to traffic characteristics, wherein said making an inference of user interest is further based on the traffic characteristics.

16. The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving information relating to weather characteristics in a region relating to at least one of the current location and the target destination, wherein said making an inference of user interest is further based on the weather characteristics.

17. The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving information relating to an estimated time until arrival at the target destination, wherein said making an inference of user interest is further based on the estimated time until arrival at the target destination.

18. The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving information relating to a time since a last stop, wherein said making an inference of user interest is further based on the time since the last stop.

19. The method of claim 12, comprising receiving information relating to user needs, including:

(a) receiving information relating to user personal information and user preferences; and

(b) determining the user needs based on the user personal information and the user preferences.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the user personal information and user preferences are at least partially based on at least one of a user driving history and a user consumption history.

21. The method of claim 12 further comprising:

receiving a user speech input;

performing speech recognition on the user speech input, thereby extracting information relating to user needs;

formulating a prompt designed to extract information relating to user needs;

generating speech useful for communicating the generated navigational instructions, selected promotional offers, and formulated prompts to the user; and

communicating the generated speech to the user.

22. The method of claim 12 comprising receiving information relating to at least one available route between the target destination and a current location, wherein said making an inference of user interest based on the target destination includes making an inference of user interest based on the available route.

23. The method of claim 12 comprising computing information relating to at least one available route between the target destination and a current location, wherein said making an inference of user interest based on the target destination includes making an inference of user interest based on the available route.

24. A method for providing navigational instructions to a person traveling in a vehicle, the vehicle having a navigation system therein, comprising:

inferring an interest of a person traveling in a vehicle;

identifying a potential vehicle target destination relating to the inferred interest of the person; and

providing navigational instructions that correspond to the potential vehicle target destination.

25. The method of claim 24 further comprising:  
determining information pertaining to the operation of the vehicle;  
and  
inferring the interest of the person based in part on the information  
pertaining to the operation of the vehicle.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said determining information  
pertaining to the operation of the vehicle includes receiving information relating to  
previous vehicle operation.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said receiving information relating  
to previous vehicle operation includes receiving information relating to a time  
since a last stop.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein said determining information  
pertaining to the operation of the vehicle includes receiving information relating to  
present vehicle condition.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said receiving information relating  
to present vehicle condition includes receiving information relating to automated  
fault detection associated with the vehicle.



30. The method of claim 25, wherein said determining information pertaining to the operation of the vehicle includes receiving information relating to future vehicle operation.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein said receiving information relating to future vehicle operation includes receiving information relating to an estimated time until arrival at a target destination.

32. A method for distributing promotional information to a person located in a vehicle, the vehicle having a vehicle navigation system therein, comprising:

determining information pertaining to operation of the vehicle;

inferring an interest of the person based in part on the information pertaining to the operation of the vehicle; and

communicating promotional information relating to the inferred interest of the person located in the vehicle.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said determining information pertaining to the operation of the vehicle includes receiving information relating to previous vehicle operation.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein said receiving information relating to previous vehicle operation includes receiving information relating to a time since a last stop.

35. The method of claim 32, wherein said determining information pertaining to the operation of the vehicle includes receiving information relating to present vehicle condition.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein said receiving information relating to present vehicle condition includes receiving information relating to automated fault detection associated with the vehicle.

37. The method of claim 32, wherein said determining information pertaining to the operation of the vehicle includes receiving information relating to future vehicle operation.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein said receiving information relating to future vehicle operation includes receiving information relating to a target destination.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein said receiving information relating to a target destination includes receiving information relating to at least one available route between a current location and a target destination.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein said receiving information relating to future vehicle operation includes receiving information relating to an estimated time until arrival at a target destination.

41. The method of claim 32, further comprising:  
determining a target vehicle destination for the vehicle; and  
inferring an interest of the person based in part on the target vehicle destination.

42. A method of marketing a vehicle navigation system, comprising:  
contracting with vendors to distribute promotional offers to users of the vehicle navigation system in exchange for monetary consideration;  
providing the vehicle navigation system to users, wherein the navigation system is adapted to make an inference of user interest based on information relating to user needs and at least one of a current location and a target destination, and adapted to distribute promotional offers based on the inferred user interest;  
gathering information from the user that relates to user needs; and  
distributing promotional offers to the users via the vehicle navigation system.

43. The method of claim 42, comprising subsidizing a cost of the vehicle navigation system with the monetary consideration.

44. The method of claim 42, comprising:

contracting with the users to provide the vehicle navigation system to the users in exchange for rights to gather and sell information relating to user needs;

selling information relating to user needs to interested parties in exchange for monetary consideration.

45. The method of claim 44, comprising subsidizing a cost of the vehicle navigation system with the monetary consideration.

46. The method of claim 42, wherein said gathering information from the user that relates to user needs includes recognizing user speech uttered in the vehicle that contains information relating to user needs, thereby extracting information relating to user needs.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the user speech uttered in the vehicle includes speech uttered for reasons other than interaction with the vehicle navigation system.